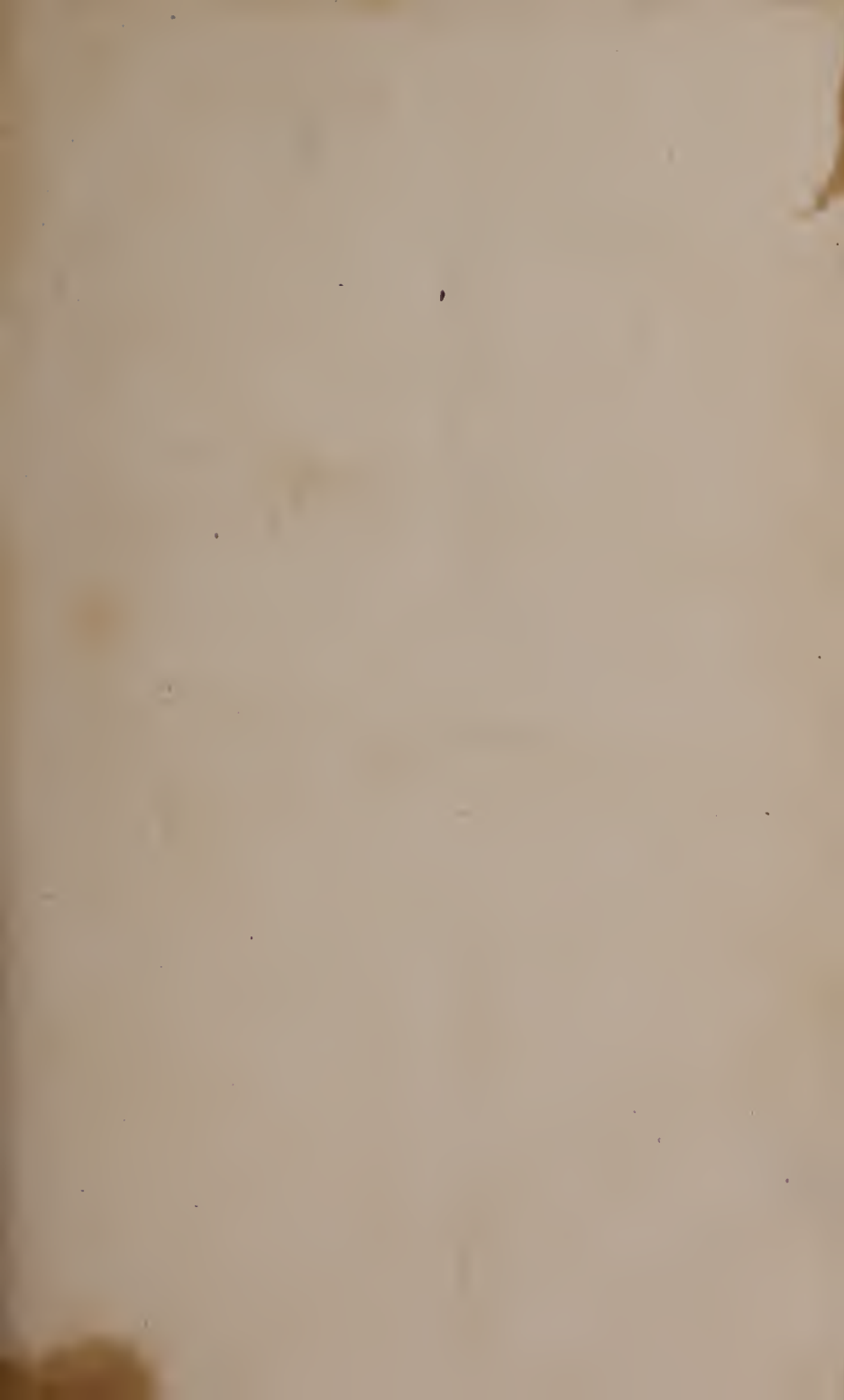




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# Banner of the Covenant.

OCTOBER, 1850.

## Theological Discussions.

[From the Evangelical Repository.]

### THE FRIENDS OF AN INSPIRED PSALMODY DEFENDED.

In a work lately published by Wm. S. Martien, and entitled, "A Practical Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, in a Series of Lectures adapted to be read in families and social meetings, by Rev. Wm. Neill, D.D., author of the Biblical History, &c.," we find the following remarks on the 19th verse of the 5th chapter :

With a view to cherish the sacred influences of the Spirit, and give utterance to the religious pleasures with which he fills the soul, we are directed to use psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The heathen were in the habit of singing profane and impure songs in some of their idolatrous festivals. This was particularly the case in the worship of Bacchus, and of Diana of the Ephesians. Instead of these indecent and coarse odes, designed to gratify lust and honour idols, the apostle taught the Christians of those times to sing psalms and hymns, composed on evangelical subjects, and in honour of the true God. And this piece of advice, though drawn from the apostle by peculiar circumstances, is nevertheless of general use and application. What are called fashionable songs of our times, cannot, perhaps, be called idolatrous, excepting such as have been composed to celebrate the praises of angels or canonized saints; but really they are not generally favourable to moral and religious improvement. Most of them are senseless; and some, that are often sung, and, by a certain description of people, much admired, are immoral, and of bad tendency. Love songs are for the most part fulsome, and offensive to delicacy and true refinement. Even patriotic songs, which are usually the best, abound in the praises of fortune or the flattery of great men, to a degree which often borders very closely on a kind of modified and elegant idolatry. The singing of Jehovah's praise is a branch of his instituted worship; and we should be careful not to deprive him who made us of any part of the honour which is due to his holy name. For this delightful part of worship we are furnished in Scripture with ample and appropriate matter. The book of Psalms, chiefly written by David, is a rich and inestimable treasure. "Composed upon particular occasions," says the pious Bishop Horne, "yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrance; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful: their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who has once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."—*Pref. to Com.*

"Hymns and spiritual Songs."—By these I understand short pieces, grounded on portions of Holy Scripture, adapted to particular occasions, and expressive of gratitude to God for his great mercies. How strange it is that some Christians object to the use of such compositions in religious worship! Can it be doubted, in

the face of our text, that the Christians of Ephesus used hymns and spiritual songs? And did they not do so under the sanction and by the advice of Paul the apostle? That hymns or spiritual songs, bottomed on the word of God, whether a versified exposition of a particular passage or a condensed exhibition of gospel truth, taken from various passages, and clothed in decent and serious language, may be sung in divine worship, whether public or private, appears to me perfectly obvious and uncontested. Yet it is a curious fact that many Christian congregations, and some, too, in our own connexion, have conscientious scruples on this subject. The chaste and evangelical compositions of Dr. Watts, as well his rich and beautiful version of the Psalms, as his highly devotional hymns and spiritual songs, are denounced and excluded from the sanctuary, while the miserable doggerel of Rouse is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers, or the charms of music. But happily for the Church, this prejudice is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence, and will ere long give place entirely to more rational and liberal views.

It is with no small degree of reluctance that we call the attention of the Christian community to the foregoing extract from this excellent work. For its author we entertain a feeling of profound respect, and in this feeling we are sure we have the sympathies of the Christian public. He has spent many years of active service in the cause of the Divine Master, and we trust that in that service he has been instrumental in doing much good. Sorry indeed would we be to say or do any thing that would have a tendency to detract in the least from the fair reputation of this venerable servant of God, or awaken in his own breast one unpleasant emotion. We feel, however, impelled by a sense of duty, even at the risk of doing this, to say something in defence of views which the author has seen proper to oppose in his exposition of this passage of the divine word. It becomes us to vindicate what we believe to be the truth, when that truth is opposed, however highly we may esteem the person opposing it. It cannot be denied that the subject is one which, in its own nature, possesses no small degree of importance. It relates to the worship of Almighty God. The ordinances of this worship we both have, by our profession, solemnly promised to "observe, keep pure and entire." In regulating our worship, the authority of God has the first claim to our consideration. The distinguished reformer, John Calvin, says, in his "reply to Cardinal Sadolet's letter," "The primary rudiments by which we are wont to train to piety those whom we wish to gain as disciples of Christ, are these, namely, not to frame any new worship of God for themselves at random, and after their own pleasure, but to know that the only legitimate worship is that which he himself approved from the beginning, for we maintain that the sacred oracle declared that obedience is more excellent than sacrifice. (1 Sam. xv. 22.) In short, we train them, by every means, to be content with the one rule of worship which they have received from His mouth, and bid adieu to all fictitious worship." The question, therefore, involved in this discussion, according to this author, relates to a "primary rudiment of piety." Of all the parts of divine worship, there is none which has stronger claims upon our attention than that of praise, it being an exercise in which we address ourselves directly to the great God, and in which we are associated with the pure and bright spirits above, that "stand and praise God day and night in his temple." The difference, therefore, between our worthy father and those whom he opposes, is no small matter; it involves the most important interests.

In addition to the intrinsic character of the subject, the manner in which the author has seen proper to express himself in opposition to the views of the friends of an inspired psalmody, would seem to call

for some notice. According to him his own views are "rational and liberal," and their correctness "perfectly obvious and incontestable," while those on the other side are a "prejudice" which "is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence." "Conscientious scruples" on this subject are spoken of as "a curious fact." Nor is this all; the very version in which they are accustomed to celebrate the praise of Jehovah, and around which the associations of two hundred years have clustered, is pronounced "the miserable doggerel of Rouse," which "is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers or the charms of music." Such is the manner in which this aged minister of the Old School Presbyterian Church has seen proper to express himself in relation to this subject. It will not surely, therefore, be considered presumption in one among the many whom he has been pleased thus to hold up to ridicule, to attempt to say a few words in defence of a principle and practice which are thus unceremoniously assailed. To him, therefore, and to those who sympathize with him in the views he has seen proper to express, we would make our appeal in the words of the Latin proverb: "Audi alteram partem."

Before entering upon the examination of the exposition which the Dr. has given us of this passage, and which he has made the foundation of the charge which he has brought against the friends of an inspired psalmody, we must be permitted to make a few remarks in relation to the manner in which he has been pleased to speak of what he calls their "conscientious scruples," and to direct the attention of the reader to the class of persons upon whom his reflections must fall. Those "scruples" are with him a "prejudice," a prejudice opposed to what is "perfectly obvious and incontestable." Now we would submit whether it would not have become the Dr. to have spoken more respectfully of the opinions of those to whom he refers. He knows or ought to know that there are in this country not less than four or five hundred ministers of the gospel of the Presbyterian family, (to say nothing of those over the Atlantic,) and he knows or ought to know that there are from fifteen to twenty congregations, even in this city, to whom these remarks must be regarded as applicable, and to whom they must have been designed to apply. It is true that those churches who hold forth in their profession the views opposed by the Dr. are not so large, and consequently do not occupy so conspicuous a position in the world as the General Assembly Presbyterian Church. Yet he will surely not despise them on this account! These churches are sister churches of his own, possessing in many respects a common faith with hers, and labouring with her to advance the cause of a pure Christianity. We trust it is his desire to see the members of the Presbyterian family united in one organization, and "striving together for the faith of the gospel," and we would submit to him whether such remarks as those which he has seen proper to make, are not calculated to widen the breaches already existing? "Families and social meetings" are here called on to read, "in the absence of their pastors," that the opposition of the friends of inspired psalmody to the use of hymns, "whose form," says Dr. Watts, "is mere human composure," is a mere "prejudice," a prejudice opposed to what is "perfectly obvious and incontestable," and that this opposition is a "curious fact," so curious as to call forth the exclamation, "How strange!" Nor does he stop here; the very version endeared to their hearts by so many interesting and affecting associations, he stigmatizes as a "miserable doggerel." Such language we regard as unworthy of Dr. Neill.

Not only do these remarks hold up to contempt hundreds of evangelical ministers and churches in this country and in Europe, but also some of the brightest ornaments of the church in past days. It will not be denied, we presume, that the principle of an inspired psalmody was the principle recognised by the Westminster Assembly. One of the first resolutions of this Assembly was to dismiss from Rouse's version every extraneous composition—such as hymns and doxologies, which were sometimes affixed to the psalms, and occasionally sung at the close of praise. Having excluded all human composition, they adopted the principle of a metrical translation. Should there be any doubt entertained on these points, the reader has only to consult the twelfth chapter of the "History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, compiled by the Board of Publication from the best authorities," and these doubts will be removed. According to this history, the principle they then adopted and acted upon, was, "that in using the book of psalms in the praise of God, we should not only keep to the sense, but to the *words* of the Scripture text." This is also evident from the Confession itself, which authorizes only "singing of psalms." To this expression, the General Assembly Presbyterian Church added the words "or hymns;" thereby clearly showing that they regarded the old Confession as not authorizing the use of any other. Our author, therefore, in the remarks made by him on this subject, has represented the Westminster Assembly, perhaps the most distinguished for learning and piety of any which has set since the days of the Apostles, and to which he is indebted for his Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as opposing a principle, "perfectly obvious and incontestable," and that, too, after having had the subject for years under consideration.

But we have not only a recognition of this principle by this venerable Assembly, but we have in our possession an express declaration, over their signatures, of some of the men who composed this Assembly, and of others who occupied the highest rank in theological literature, and whose writings constitute an imperishable monument of their talent and learning. Let it be remembered, too, that these were English divines, and some of them favourable to the independent or congregational form of church government, and who therefore cannot be supposed to have been influenced by Scottish preferences. In an edition of the Westminster version of the Psalms, published in 1673, the reader will find the following preface and the following names affixed to it.

"Surely, singing of Psalms is a duty of such comfort and profit, that it needeth not our recommendation; the new nature is instead of all arguments, which cannot be without this scriptural solace. Our devotion is best secured, where the matter and the words are of immediately divine inspiration; and to us, David's Psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of *psalms*; and *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*, which the apostle useth. Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16. But it is meet that these divine compositions should be represented to us in a fit translation, lest we want David in David; while his holy ecstasies are delivered in a flat and bold expression. The translation which is now put in thy hand, cometh nearest to the original of any that we have seen, and runneth with such a fluent sweetness that we thought it fit to recommend it for thy Christian acceptance; some of us having used it already, with great comfort and satisfaction.

"This recommendation is subscribed by John Owen, D.D., Thomas Manton, D.D. Henry Langley, D.D., William Jenkyns, James Kines, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lye, Matthew Poole, John Millward, John Chester, George Cokayn, Matt. Mead, Robert Franklin, Thomas Doolittle, Thomas Vincent, Nathaniel Vincent, John Rythac, Wm. Thompson, Nicholas Blaikie, Charles Morton, Edmund Calamy, Wm. Carslake, James Janeway, John Hicks, John Baker, Richard Mayo."

Here we have a host of theological giants at whose head stands the prince of English divines, the celebrated Dr. Owen; declaring that "David's psalms seem to them to be plainly intended by the terms, *psalms*, and *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*, which the Apostle uses, Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16." The friends of an inspired psalmody can bear to be represented as adhering to a "prejudice" in company with such men.

"Ridgely's Body of Divinity" is regarded as a very superior work, and the author occupies deservedly a high place as a standard writer on theology. He discusses at considerable length the propriety of using the psalms of David, and vindicates it by a number of cogent arguments. He expresses himself on the subject with great candour, and, while he does not decidedly condemn the use of hymns of human composition on very special occasions, the language which he employs indicates no small degree of doubt in relation to the lawfulness of their use, and he acknowledges that "some of much superior learning" to himself "have maintained their unlawfulness." He, however, declares it to be his opinion, that the "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned by the Apostle, refer to the psalms of David. "It cannot be denied," says he, "that the psalms of David are called indifferently by these three names." In this opinion he is clearly opposed to the exposition of our author, on the ground of which he brings the charge of "prejudice" against the friends of an inspired psalmody.

Dr. Gill, the learned Calvinistic divine of the Baptist school, interprets this passage in the same way, both in his "Body of Divinity," and Commentary. In his introductory remarks to the first psalm, he says, after mentioning the different titles of the psalms, "To these several names of this book, the Apostle manifestly refers in Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16." In his exposition of Eph. v. 19, he says, "The hymns are only another name for the book of psalms," and that "by spiritual songs are meant the same psalms of David, Asaph, &c." From this he infers that it is "the intention of the Apostle that David's psalms should be sung in gospel churches."

Doddridge, although differing from him in his opinion, says, in his note to Col. iii. 16, that Calvin "thinks all these words refer to David's poetical pieces." We have here, then, according to Dr. Doddridge, the opinion of Calvin, in opposition to that of our author, and when we consider the vast erudition of this distinguished individual, we will know how to appreciate it.

Macknight limits the "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned by the Apostle, to those which were "recorded in the scripture," and to such as were "dictated by the Spirit." He also tells us that "Beza thinks *psalms* in this passage denote those poetical compositions in which David uttered his complaints and prayers; also those historical narrations by which he instructed the people; and *hymns* are his other compositions in which he celebrated the praises of God." Surely the opinion of this learned professor and accomplished scholar is worth something.

The continuators of Henry's Commentary explain "the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned in Col. iii. 16, to be "the psalms of David, and spiritual hymns and odes, collected out of the Scriptures, and suited to special occasions."

Bloomfield, while he extends the injunctions of the Apostle to the use of those psalms that were composed by the direct and extraordinary influences of the Spirit in the days of the Apostle, as well as the psalms

of David, says that "the psalms differ in no material respect from the hymns," which they certainly do, if, as our author intimates, the former refers to the psalms of David, and the other to those which were composed by men.

Brown, in his Bible Dictionary, seems to take it for granted that these three are all the same. He says, "When psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs are mentioned together, psalms may denote such as were sung on instruments; hymns, such as contain only matter of praise; and spiritual songs such as contain doctrine, history, and prophecy, for men's instruction. Eph. v. 19."

Horne, in his "Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures," interprets, in the same way, this passage; for he quotes it along with others to prove that "the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord and the instructions of Paul." He is here speaking of the use of the psalms of David.

Durham says, "Psalms, in scripture, are such parts of books as were specially intended to be made use of for the praising of God, and for the edifying and comforting of his people in singing of them. Three sorts of them were in use among the Hebrews, (as the titles of our psalms declare, and as they are mentioned by the Apostle, Eph. v. 19.)"

We have thus presented to the reader, as briefly as we have been able to do, the opinions of some of the most learned and respectable commentators on the reference of the Apostle in the use of those terms in this passage, which our worthy father regards as so condemnatory of the conduct of those who confine the matter of their praise to the songs of divine inspiration. It will not be denied that if the exposition given by these authorities be correct, there is no warrant in the word of God for the use of any other than those "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," which have been dictated by the Spirit. As the Dr. has seen proper to give an exposition in opposition to that of these authorities, and from this exposition to take occasion to hold up the advocates of an inspired psalmody as the victims of a "prejudice, which is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence," the reader may see with whom it is they have the honour of being associated.

The quotations given above are in relation to the exposition of the passage. We shall now quote some of the remarks of distinguished divines, either in relation to the impropriety of making use of any other songs than those of divine inspiration in the worship of God, or in relation to the sufficiency and suitableness of those for this purpose.

Calvin, among other things in praise of the book of psalms, says, in his preface to his commentary on this book, "I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not improperly, 'An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul,' for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious, that is not here represented, as in a mirror. Or rather the Holy Spirit has drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated." Now if this be really true of the psalms of David, may we not say with the pious Henry, "Further than these psalms we need not go for hymns and spiritual songs."

Luther, in his preface to the Psalter, thus remarks:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalm of thanksgiving and praise? There you look all the saints in the heart, as in a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself; whose delicate, sweet, and lovely flowers are springing up there, of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts towards God and his goodness! And

again, where do you find deeper, more mournful and weeping words of sorrow, than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look all the saints in the heart; but as into death, yea, as into hell, where it is all dark and gloomy, from all manner of melancholy apprehensions of God's displeasure! I hold that there never has appeared on earth, and never can appear, a more precious book of examples and legends of saints, than the Psalter is. For here we find not merely what one or two holy men have done, but what the Head himself of all saints has done, and what all the saints do still. How they feel towards God, towards friends and enemies; how they behave and sustain themselves in all dangers and sufferings. Besides, all manner of divine and statutory instructions and commands are contained therein. Hence, too, it comes, that the Psalter forms, as it were, *a little book of all saints*, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments, which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake, so expressed, that he could not improve them himself, nor even wish them better than they are."

Now we ask, with all respect, if the psalms of David be such as they are here declared by this distinguished German Reformer to be, did it become Dr. Neill to speak as he has done of those who are unwilling to exchange them for hymns of human composition?

Hooker, the author of "The Ecclesiastical Polity," thus comments on the psalms:

"What is there necessary for man to know," says this pious and judicious divine, "which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."

In the preface to the commentary on the book of Psalms by Patrick, Lowth, Arnold, Whitby, and Lowman, the following remarks occur:—

"It is called, in their language, *Sepher Tehillim, the book of praises or hymns, the praises of the Lord*, because, though there are many complaints and imprecations, and prayers in it, yet the greatest part are praises and thanksgivings unto God; and in those others there are many mixtures of acknowledgments of what God had formerly done for him, or of confidence what he would still do, or of resolutions how thankful he would be when God granted him deliverance. Which gave them such a strange power to cure heaviness, to wipe away sorrow, and to lay asleep troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with any sort of pains (they are the words of Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople,) as well as to move compunction for sin, and to stimulate unto piety, that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes."

After stating that "the churches of Africa sang *divina cantica prophetarum*, (the divine songs of the prophets,) while the drunken Donatists sang the composures of human wit," these commentators add: "By which means the people came to be so well acquainted with them, that (as the same Theodoret tells us in his preface to this book of psalms,) both in the city and country this was the employment of Christian people. They that minded no other book of the Scriptures, yet had this so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they are wont to recreate themselves by the singing of these holy songs."

“But I must not enlarge on this subject, nor fill this preface with the high commendations which the ancients give both of psalmody and of this book of psalms, which St. Basil (who alone would furnish me with a sense of all the rest, if it were fit to transcribe his preface to it,) calls the ‘common treasure of all good precepts’ (containing the perfection of all the rest of the Scriptures,) the voice of the church, in which may be found a complete body of theology.” There is much more in this preface, equally pointed and expressive.

Horne, in his “Introduction,” a work of high authority, quotes with approbation the following remark of “the editor of the 4to Bible, of 1810, with the notes of several of the venerable reformers.” “The language in which Moses, and David, and Solomon, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun worshipped God, is applicable to Christian believers. They worship the same God, through the same adorable Redeemer, they give thanks for similar mercies, and mourn under similar trials; they are looking for the same blessed hope of their calling, even everlasting life and salvation, through the prevailing intercession of the Messiah.”

This author himself says, (after giving an account of the book of Psalms, and the observance of it in the worship of God by divine authority under the former dispensation,) “the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the instructions of St. Paul (Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16, compared with Rev. v. 9, xiv. 1, 2, 3), and the practice of divine psalmody has subsisted through every succeeding age to our own time, not more to the delight than to the edification of the church of Christ.” “He who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul in the psalmist’s form of words rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey a higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.”

Mastricht, in his Latin System of Divinity, a work of a most learned and elaborate character, and not less distinguished for its orthodoxy and piety, says as follows, as his first remark under the head of psalmody: “Hic observandum: ut ecclesia, publicè cantanda non permittat, nisi quæ præstant in Scripturis.” (Here it is to be observed that the church may not permit to be publicly sung any but such as stand in the Scriptures.)

Rev. Wm. Romaine, of the church of England, and author of the “Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith,” a work breathing a soul imbued with the spirit of the gospel, makes use of the following remarks in addition to much more of the same purport, which, for the sake of brevity, we omit:

“We know from very clear testimony that the Psalms were sung in the Temple until its final destruction. We are certain that Christ made use of the Psalms. His apostles followed his example. The churches of Corinth, and Ephesus, and Colosse, made the singing of psalms part of their public worship. Such of the twelve tribes as were scattered abroad, being persecuted for Christ’s sake, did sing psalms when they were in a happy frame; for they were commanded to do it by the apostle James. The church’s history affords abundant evidence of the use of psalms in every country converted to the faith, and of their being sung in the church as a part of public worship. This has been the case in every age, without any interrup-



tion. The primitive Christians sung in all their church meetings. Eusebius says, in the second century they sung psalms in praise of Christ and his deity. In the time of Justin Martyr, instrumental music was abolished, and he highly commends singing with the voice, because, says he, psalms, with organs and cymbals, are fitter to please children, than to instruct the church. In the third century, we read much of psalm singing. Arius was complained of as a perverter of this ordinance. St. Augustine makes it a high crime, in certain heretics, that they sung hymns composed by human wit. The sense in which the church of Christ understood this subject, has been, till of late years, always one and uniform. Now we leave the ancient beaten path. But why? Have we found a better? How came we to be wiser than the prophets, than Christ, than his apostles, and the primitive Christians, yea, the whole church of God? They, with one consent, have sung psalms in every age. Here I leave the reader to his own reflections. There is one plain inference to be made from hence; none can easily mistake it. May he see it in his judgment, and follow it in his practice.

“What, say some, is it unlawful to sing human compositions in the church? How can that be? Why, they sing them at such a place, and such a place: great men, and good men, ay, and lively ministers too, sing them: will you set up your judgment against theirs?”

“It is an odious thing to speak of one’s self, except it be to magnify the grace of God. What is my private judgment? I set it up against nobody in indifferent things; I wish to yield to every man’s infirmity: for I want the same indulgence myself. But, in the present case, the Scripture, which is our only rule of judgment, has not left the matter indifferent. God has given us a large collection of hymns, and has commanded them to be sung in the church, and has promised his blessing to the singing of them. No respect here must be paid to names or authorities, though they be the greatest on earth; because no one can dispense with the command of God, and no one by his wit can compose hymns to be compared with the Psalms of God. *I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost.* His collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and not capable of any improvement. Why, in such a case would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down and write hymns for the use of the church? It is just the same as if he were to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better that the old may be thrown aside. What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertently, I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the Psalms, introduce their own verses into the church, sing them with great delight, and, as they fancy, with great profit; although the whole practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and, therefore, cannot possibly be accompanied with the blessing of God.”

— “The words of God are pure words.” Ps. xii. 6.

Let us hear what the celebrated Jonathan Edwards says on this subject. In the 5th volume of his Works, page 20, we find the following language employed by him:

“Those holy songs are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy affections; such as an humble and fervent love to God, admiration of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest desires, thirstings, and pantings of soul after him; delight and joy in God, a sweet and melting gratitude for his great goodness, a holy exultation and triumph of soul in his favour, sufficiency and faithfulness; his love to, and delight in, the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great delight in the word and ordinances of God, his grief for his own and others’ sins, and his fervent zeal for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection of which the Psalms of David are every where full, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the *Psalmist of Israel*, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the psalms he speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affections; and in many others he speaks in the name of the church.”

Such is the testimony which may be adduced in favour of an interpretation directly opposed to that of the Dr., by which he has at-

tempted to represent the advocates of an inspired psalmody as refusing to comply with the solemn command of the Apostle, and such is the testimony which may be adduced in favour of the Scripture psalms, as every way suited to the Christian church, and those to which the church is bound to adhere in the praise of God. We have adduced this testimony, not because we think the Christian should submit his faith to the authority or teachings of any man or set of men, but simply for the purpose of showing that the views of those opposed by Dr. Neill, are not those of a few bigoted, and narrow-minded, and old-fashioned Scotch Presbyterians, but that they are the views of persons of different denominations of Christians, and renowned for their learning and piety.

To this it may be objected, that there is no evidence that all these persons did not make use of human composition, and there is evidence that some of them did use such hymns. In regard to this it may be observed that we are not to infer from the fact that hymns have been used by persons on certain occasions, for their religious recreation, that they regarded themselves in the use of them as performing an act of formal worship to Almighty God. Uninspired songs were doubtless used by the Hebrews on special occasions, but would they have thought of bringing them into the temple of God, or into their synagogues, when engaged in His solemn worship, after receiving from God the command to praise him in the words of David and Asaph the seer? But admitting that such hymns were used by these persons in the formal worship of God, it remains to be proved that in doing so they pretended to assert a divine warrant for what they did. They perhaps entertained views somewhat loose in regard to Christians regulating their worship by the will and word of Christ. We know that there is not that regard paid to this matter by many professing protestants, which one would reasonably expect. But we must also take into consideration the influences to which they may have been subjected by their associations, and the peculiar circumstances in which they may have been placed. We all know that persons do, under the force of circumstances, and in compliance with the customs existing in the society to which they belong, what, were they left to their free choice, they would not do. They think it better to comply, than produce excitement and division in the church of God. Calvin, in his tract on "The necessity of reforming the church," makes these remarks: "We are not so unacquainted with ordinary life as not to know that the church always has been and always will be liable to some defects which the pious are indeed bound to disapprove, but which are to be borne rather than to be made a cause of fierce contention." How far those who have thus expressed themselves were influenced by this consideration, we do not pretend to say, nor is it for us to account for their conduct. It is with their sentiments as expressed and delivered by themselves in the sober and calm moments of thought and study that we have to do. These we have laid before the reader, and it is for him to judge what they teach. What, for instance, does the very extract from Horne, given by Dr. Neill in his exposition teach us? We presume the sentiment expressed by Horne met with his approbation. Now let the reader reperuse the quotation, and then ask himself, in all candour, to what conclusion the remarks of the bishop must necessarily lead him. If these psalms be "designed for general use," if they are

adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel, no less than of the Israelites under the law," if "they suit mankind in all situations," if "the fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrance; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful," then I ask, why make use of the "productions of human wit," when you have the songs of the Spirit, and why throw contempt upon those who are unwilling to make the exchange? Is it a mere "prejudice" to refuse to serve God with any thing but the *best* we have, especially when he himself has made provision for this service? Will the Dr. answer this question?

(To be continued.)

### Romanism.

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

#### ROMANISM A NOVELTY IN IRELAND.

[Continued.]

We shall not now dwell upon the other peculiarities of the Roman schism which have been the novelties of modern ages. Time would not allow us. But we shall briefly confine ourselves to two great points—the opinion of the early church as to the *Standard of Faith*, and the doctrine of *Justification*, the two roots from which all others spring.

It is a fact authenticated beyond contradiction, that the early Irish Christians referred to the Bible and the Bible alone, as their great rule of faith. "It is written," and "Thus saith the Lord," appear to have been the motto of St. Patrick's confessions, and of the general canons of his synod, so that Jocelin, his principal "Biographer"—how faithful as a biographer he is, is another question—tells us (c. 12,) "that he exercised himself much in reading the scriptures from the earliest age," and Secundinus, his nephew, says of him, that "He found the sacred treasure in the holy volume," and describes him as

"Verus cultor, et insignis, agri Evangelici,  
Cujus semina videntur Christi Evangelia."

"A true and eminent cultivator of the evangelical field, whose seeds appear to have been the gospels of Christ." And in a work of his entitled "On Abuses of the World," p. 77, St. Patrick, when treating on female modesty, thus writes, "It always delights in, and consents with good morals, and refreshes the soul by continual meditation, and discourses, or conversations on the scriptures." Thus he exhorts females to read the word of God for themselves; and we must again *especially* observe that neither *here* nor *elsewhere* in his works, does he refer to any other fountain of moral conduct. Of St. Columbkil, we are thus informed by his biographer, Adamanus, (Lib. 1, c. 1,) that he was one—"Qui etiam a puero deditus Christiano tyrocinio et sapientiæ studiis." "Who, even from his boyhood, was given to a Christian education and the studies of wisdom." And that, in their early days, the scriptures were common in the language of the people, and not locked up under the letter of a priest's permission, nor in any unknown tongue, is positively asserted by Chrysostom, who wrote at least before the year 407, "Although thou shouldst go to the ocean and those British Isles," &c., "thou shouldst hear all men every where discoursing matters out of the scriptures with another voice indeed, but not with another faith." (De util.

Scrip. Ed. Sav. v. viii. page 3.) And it is still further evidenced by this still more decisive assertion of Bede, (lib. I. c. i.) "This island (Britain) at this present time, with five different languages, to the numbers of the five books of Moses, doth study and set forth the knowledge of the perfect truth—that is, with the language of the English, the Britons, the Scots (or Irish,) the Picts, and the Latins, which by study of scriptures is made common to all the rest." This is the secret why Ireland was called "The Island of Saints," and why it was called the school of the west, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature. So that it became the place of resort for the nobles of England, who left their country that they might there study the sacred writings, so much so, that even Alfred, the Northumbrian king, voluntarily went thither to pursue his course of learning; and so greatly did the books of the early Christians engross his attention, that he procured the character of being "most learned in the scriptures." This is the reason why the early Irish church was such a shining light, and poured forth, among her own people, the precepts of the gospel, while she sent out her crowds of sacred teachers amid the savage clans and roving hordes of other nations. But be it remembered that during a great portion of this time, when she was accounted the island of saints, a title, not boastfully assumed by her own children, but willingly conferred by the reverence of the foreigners she instructed—while she sent her missionaries into every region, and all Christendom honoured her, the BIBLE was in the hands of her people—young and old, male and female, and she had no connexion with Rome!! Those indeed were the halcyon days of Ireland.

Such was, and such is, the true Catholic church, and the true Catholic doctrine early enjoined as by the Almighty. Deut. vi. 6. "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," &c., and the Psalmist David declares, Ps. xix. 7, "The testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to the little ones," (Rhemish version,) and the Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy "to continue in the things which he had learned, knowing from whom he had received them," namely, from his mother and grandmother. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii. 15. It is an humbling mark of modern corruption and Satanic innovation, that the Bible should be a sealed book to any. In the primitive church of Ireland it was every where read, and by all classes and persons, who were encouraged and exhorted to engage in this hallowed study. Then the church was orthodox at home, and Erin was then an "Island of Saints," to spread by its missions its blessings around.

But when the rude foot and spoiling hand of the northern invaders had in a great measure dimmed its light, and worn out, by their frequent incursions, the torch bearers of truth—when Danish invasion had sapped the strength of the country—corrupted the principles of the people—destroyed many of the churches and colleges—when the Romish church had transgressed the limits of spiritual power—had corrupted truth—forsaken its fountain-head, as it flows forth in all its freshness from the records of eternity—had introduced error after error in the symbol of her faith, until she had lost all spiritual resemblance to the *Church of*

*Christ*; and when, finally, she had enslaved the understandings and consciences of men, by chaining the Bible in the bondage of a foreign tongue; then, "*darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people,*" until at length that *Word*, which is the polar star of Catholic truth, was brought forth, from the dungeon in which it long had lain, at the Reformation morn, and dispersed the sable clouds of gloom. Oh! never may the compromising spirit of expediency prevail to shade its glorious effulgence under an attenuating veil! The spiritual eye of faith can well bear the full brilliancy of the glory of God, as revealed there in Christ Jesus our Lord; nor is it necessary to reduce that brightness to the twilight ray or reflected beam, by which the sun, when he cometh forth from his chambers of the east like a giant refreshed with wine, to run his daily course, is softened down to accommodate the human vision—but the eye of the weakest may gaze upon it, and gather strength as it looks on its beauty! Yes, alas! as the world grew old, the blight of superstition obliterated from the recollection of men the acquisitions of past experience, and obstructed the path of knowledge—a priesthood arose which incorporated with itself the malicious tyranny and delusive agency of Satanic power. But at last in that cold dominion of death, and darkness of the grave, some heaven-taught spirits glanced across the gloomy night of error, and roused the nations out of the Lethean slumbers into which they had fallen. The Irish church heard the awakening summons, as the voice of religious liberty and independence was borne by Fame, with her hundred tongues, from Germany, the battle ground of freedom, and Switzerland, the cradle of the reformation, and retracing the long course of waywardness by which it had deviated from the clear track of ancient truth, recalled to memory its former days of loveliness and light, breathed once more the holy atmosphere of its youth, and seeking out the fond imagery of the good that had been lost, walked again in all the expansiveness of that heavenly liberty which experience and revelation can maintain. Oh! when shall that day dawn, when the yet blinded, down-trodden, and soul-enslaved serfs of the man of sin, the millions of popish devotees in that land, shall also rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free!

(To be concluded.)

### Miscellaneous.

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

REMARKS ON AN ARTICLE BY "A LAYMAN."

*To the Editors of the Banner of the Covenant,—*

GENTLEMEN:—In looking over the late numbers of the Banner, I find a writer, who signs himself "a Layman," undertaking to show the church a better and more efficient plan of sustaining the ministry of the church to which I have the honour to belong. Going no farther back than the August number now before me, I would remark, that he assumes a position which is incorrect, that is, that he has showed that the present system of raising money for the support of ministers of the gospel, by assessed pew rents, is unscriptural and inexpedient. As there is no positive plan laid down in the word of God for raising the funds for that purpose, it cannot be unscriptural, and as to its being inexpedient, payment of the ministers out of a common fund, in a country so varied in its circumstances and conditions as ours is, will bring about that evil he

so much deprecates, that is, not only forcing some of our ministers to leave the study of the scriptures, the care of their flock, and lay aside the dignity of their office, by following some business, such as teaching or farming, or some mechanical occupation if you please, in order to earn a support for themselves and families; while others, I fear, would give up the calling altogether. I should like to know from Mr. Layman, how the Rev. Dr. W. of Phila., or the late or present Dr. M'L. of New York city, could support such large families as they have had, on the amount he would assign them out of the common fund? Would it even pay house rent, or meet the frequent claims made upon their hospitality? Would it educate their children respectably? Again, he very gravely tells us, that it hath been ordained of the Lord, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But what kind of a distribution would he make—pay as much to some of our young ministers in Philadelphia, or Brooklyn, or Williamsburgh, who merely pay their board in a friend's house, as to those of them who have large families, and are exposed to many, very many calls and claims on their hospitalities, which are expected to be met without fail. Therefore, the idea of running all into the same mould, is a vague notion in my opinion. For my own part, I can assure you I have had a trial for years in one of our large city congregations, in collecting moneys for various purposes connected with the church, and I could almost always get \$10 in the shape of rent, with more ease and less urgent appeals, than I could \$1 in the way of voluntary subscriptions for any of the churches' wants, so that this common fund system although it might be for the interest of some, yet it would not in my opinion be for the general good and prosperity of the church. He points to various instances where this *better system* has proved more efficient,\* and one of them is the way our forefathers were supported after the revolution of 1688. As I am not very well versed in church history, I should like to know if they had churches to preach in arranged in the same way as our modern churches are with pews; one thing is certain, that long since that time, the whole congregation had to occupy one pew, viz.: the hill-side, or the cave, or, in still more modern times, when they had permission to preach in the British Isles, but without a church, were obliged to post the herald of the cross between the shafts of a farmer's car as his pulpit, and the green earth for the pews of his attentive flock; under such circumstances, pew rent would have been out of the question, but now that God in his providence has given rest to his church, and the people of God can enter the sanctuary in peace and comfort, none molesting them, and we have the precept that all things should be done decently and in order, I think the most orderly way is, to systematize the business, and let all and every one know what is expected of them. Another example of the success of this *better system*, is the Methodist Church. Would he wish to drive the talent of our church into oblivion, and introduce such a state of affairs as exists there, where some of her preachers, as they are called, cannot

\* Our friend mistakes very much when he quotes the conduct of the Christians in Jerusalem, when they sold their possessions and laid the money at the Apostle's feet, if he intends to say that was for the support of the ministry. It was meant exclusively for the poor, of whatever standing they were in the church, and I would sooner see the same custom introduced at the present day, than oblige some of our ministers to discharge the duties of their office, and support their families on the \$750 per annum, for they could never obey that precept in the gospel, "Owe no man any thing." It would be necessary to introduce celibacy among our clergy at once.

read the sacred text in our English version of the Bible. I have it from good authority, that one of them, not long since, in New Jersey, opened the Bible to select a text, Eph. v. 2, last word of the verse, and read it thus: "A sweet smiling Saviour." Were a Reformed Presbyterian minister to do so, he would soon be left alone. As to our travelling ministers or probationers, I admit, that they receive very little, and wish they could have more, but if we would give them \$500 per annum, would any of them be willing to settle down in a country congregation, at the same rate, without the prospect of ever getting more? Would they not be likely to prefer the luxury of travelling for years, and consequently the calls for settlement would not be accepted, and the majority of our country congregations would be without a settled pastor? If Mr. Layman is a young man, without the experience of supporting a large family in the city, he is not able to judge in such matters, and should ask for information; or, if a man of family, perhaps he is in the country, where support is easily obtained, and consequently unable to form a proper estimate of city expenses.

Hoping that some abler pen may have taken up the subject before me, but feeling it to be my duty to examine it if no other does, I offer these remarks, trusting that our friend may consider the subject over again, and recall the evil he is likely to do, by stirring up a spirit of discontent, in many who do not know but that the suggestions are all right.

I remain your friend,

JAMES ABBOTT.

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

#### CHURCH MUSIC.

Pages and even volumes might be written in tracing the origin and progress of music, the various purposes in which it has been employed, and the place it has occupied in refining and civilizing man. Its existence is universal, and its influence over the human mind unbounded. But it is not our object to notice it in any of these points; we would notice it in that high and holy use for which it was designed; in which the angelic hosts delight to employ it as they strike their harps and tune their voices in celebrating the praises of the King of kings; ascribing "salvation and glory, and honour and power, unto the Lord our God." And is the *manner* in which we perform this portion of God's service of no moment? Shall there be heard among God's saints on earth, no echoes responsive to the hallelujahs of the heavenly choir? Has not God given us voices to express our thankfulness for the benefits he so plenteously bestows, as well as hearts to feel thankful? In the temple service we find music occupying a prominent place, showing that God, who has given man the power to produce and appreciate music, requires that it should be employed in his service. See with what holy delight the sweet singer of Israel calls on all God's works to praise him, his saints to bless him, and his own soul with all his powers to be stirred up to magnify his name. And while the feathered songsters warble their Creator's praise, and the insects chirp their gratitude, and all things else join in declaring the goodness of God, shall man, the most highly blessed of all his creatures, remain silent? Not only do we find the duty of praise from the very nature of things binding on the Christian, but wherever piety has produced its proper fruits, the Christian esteems this his high privilege. Historians tell us that, in primitive times, when Christians

glowed with love to God and man, songs of praise ascended from every hamlet, and all places were vocal with psalms and thanksgiving. Since then the singing God's praises is not only our privilege, but also our duty, a question of great practical importance arises as to the *manner* in which it is to be performed. In the first place, we should sing with the spirit and with the understanding, making melody in our hearts. Without this service of the heart, there can be no acceptable offering to God. However perfect the harmony, or sweet the sound, if *this* be wanting, it will be an unacceptable offering to Him who requires his worshippers to worship him in spirit and in truth. The mere gratification of our senses with the harmony of sweet sounds, is not the service of God. Forgetful of this spiritual worship, which is required, a portion of the Christian community have erred, on the one hand, in appointing hirelings—and that, too, regardless of their character—to perform for them this part of God's worship, while they with complacent delight discuss and criticise the merits of the performance, as they would that of the opera or other amusement. How can such worship be acceptable to God? Would it not be well for this class to get the other parts of God's service done by *proxy* too? On the other side, some, thinking that nothing more is necessary than internal fitness, neglect all other things, and even make a virtue of their neglect, as if their views would be clear, and their feelings warm, in direct proportion as their voices are harsh and discordant. Such persons forget the second thing which is important in the manner—that we are to make melody not only with our *hearts*, but also with our *voices*, giving God the *best* of our services. A curse was pronounced against the Jew who gave the lame or blind to the service of God, and the spirit of the gospel continues the same. Would it have been any excuse for a Jew to have offered the lame or blind of *his flock*, because they were more easily caught, and thus saved him *trouble*? Yet does not every one who neglects to take any pains for the cultivation of their voice, in order that they may join in the praises of God with more delight and profit, do the same thing. They refuse to put themselves to some trouble, that they may present the best. Is it right for an individual to sing in a discordant, monotonous, nasal tone, to the annoyance of a whole congregation, and this, just because he will not take a little trouble to learn to sing decently and in order. The church has certainly not yet reached the stopping-place of improvement on this point, and our church-music needs to be rescued from entire neglect of cultivation of the voice on the one hand, and on the other, of making that the great object, seeking the production of good music alone. When this is done, and music occupies the place for which it was designed, it will come to be a powerful instrument of usefulness and enjoyment in the church. Christian reader, should not each of us ask ourselves how far our influence has gone or is going, as individuals, to accomplish or retard, the desirable object? B.

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DEATH OF THE REV. DR. EDGAR.—At a late hour on Monday night, the 3d of June, the Rev. S. A. Edgar, D.D., died at his residence, Abbey street, Armagh, Ireland. He was Pastor of the 2d Presbyterian Church in that place; and his learned and valuable work on the "Variations of Popery," has made him well known to the Protestant world.  
—*Chr. Inst.*



BENEVOLENT EFFORTS IN ENGLAND.—The following table presents the result of the efforts of the principal societies in England. In addition to the receipts of the financial year, the date of the organization of each society is given. Such tables are not only interesting, but valuable for reference:

<i>Established.</i>			<i>Receipts.</i>		
Asylum for Idiots, . . . . .	1847	£4,700	Irish Church Mission, . . . . .	1835	£5,798
Baptist Missionary Society, . . . . .	1792	19,736	London City, . . . . .	1835	20,320
Baptist Home Mission, . . . . .		4,221	London Missionary Society, . . . . .	1794	62,555
Baptist Irish Society, . . . . .	1814		London Society for the Jews, . . . . .	1808	28,278
Baptist Theological Institute for Scotland, . . . . .	1846	150	London Society for the Pro- tection of Young Females, . . . . .	1835	800
British and For. Bible Soc., . . . . .	1804	91,634	Naval and Military Bible Soc., . . . . .	1780	2,258
British and For. Sailors' " . . . . .	1818	2,954	Orphan Working School, . . . . .	1758	4,575
British and Foreign School, . . . . .	1805	11,711	Prayer Book and Homily So- ciety, . . . . .	1812	2,707
British Missions { Home, . . . . .	1819	6,159	Protestant Association, . . . . .	1836	928
{ Irish Evangelical, . . . . .	1814	2,791	Ragged School Union, . . . . .	1844	520
{ Colonial, . . . . .	1836	2,765	Religious Tract Society, . . . . .	1799	61,327
British Society for the Jews, . . . . .	1842	4,034	Shipwreck, . . . . .	1839	7,165
Christian Instruction Society, . . . . .	1835		Society for Preaching of Gos- pel in Foreign Parts, . . . . .	1701	53,000
Church Missionary Society, . . . . .	1800	104,273	Strangers' Friend Society, . . . . .	1785	2,700
Church Scrip. Readers' Soc., . . . . .		8,072	Sunday School Union, . . . . .	1803	7,864
Church S. S. Institute, . . . . .	1844	907	Sunday School Society, . . . . .		70
Church Young Men's Soc., . . . . .	1844	1,500	Wesleyan Missionary Soc., . . . . .	1816	111,685
Colonial Church, . . . . .	1836	3,500			
Cong. Board of Education, . . . . .	1843	68	Total, . . . . .		£645,207
Foreign Aid Society, . . . . .	1840	1,506	Equal to . . . . .		\$3,122,802
Home and Colonization School Society, . . . . .	1835	346			[ <i>Philadelphia Sun.</i>

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

THE RAINBOW.—A SIGN OF PEACE.

BY WM. ALEXANDER.

WHEN the Almighty, by the ministration of angels, had closed the ponderous door of that vast fabric, Noah's ark—for it is expressly said—"The Lord shut him in;" no signs appeared to the antediluvian scoffers, save signs of dismay, dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky. The noise of God's water-spouts, and deep calling unto deep, struck terror into their guilty souls. But the refuge of lies was to be swept away; the hiding-places of sinners must be overflowed. When this had been accomplished, and earth's face was seen once more, there appeared to Noah, as he descended from his flood-wearied vessel, a rainbow of uncommon splendour, placed by his merciful Creator in the dark, retreating clouds of wrath.

The sacred significancy, then, of the rainbow, must be apparent to every pious and reflecting mind. Even pagans have ever considered it as a divine portent. While to the philosopher it presents but an interesting phenomenon, to others it utters the language of divine benevolence to man. It tells that the mighty deep shall sweep no more over earth's surface; that seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, day and night shall not cease, till He come, at whose presence earth and heavens flee away. The ordinary bow is a symbol of war. When Methuselah died, the deluge came. His name in the Hebrew tongue imports, "He dieth, and a dart goeth forth." Here, however, is a bow of different character. Its rundle is always turned from the face of earth. It aims not, for it is like a bow unstrung, the symbol of friendship. Arising, according to the laws of nature, from the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays in the spherical drops of rain, it is not said to be here for the first time created, but yet, that it is appointed to be a token of God's covenant with man, whereas, before it had no significancy.

The rainbow would be seen of a circular form, were it possible for it to come into view at the same time in our hemisphere. Such circular halos we often see about the moon. The prophet John speaks of a rainbow around the throne of God, in sight like unto an emerald. The most prevailing colour

was a pleasant green, to show the reviving and refreshing nature of the covenant of peace. And when the mighty angel shall stand with one foot on sea, and one on solid land, he, too, shall be clothed with a cloud and a rainbow of peace on his head.

We see, therefore, by this beautiful figure, that, in the midst of a cloud of wrath, He will remember mercy.

“A God all mercy, is a God unjust.”

This phenomenon has been the admiration of the poet in every age.

“My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky;  
So was it when my life began,  
So is it now, I am a man,  
So be it, when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die.”

### **Ecclesiastical Proceedings.**

[From the Scottish Presbyterian Magazine.]

#### **MEETING OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD, SCOTLAND.**

This court met in Edinburgh, in the Rev. Mr. Goold's Church, on the evening of Monday, May 6, at six o'clock. The Rev. Dr. Andrew Symington, Professor of Theology, who had occupied the Moderator's chair at the previous meeting, preached the opening sermon from Zech. iv. 14:—"These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." As the Synod requested that the Sermon might be published, and Dr. Symington agreed to take the matter under his consideration, we trust our readers shall ere long enjoy the pleasure and advantage of perusing it. It was characterized by the excellencies which usually distinguish the preacher's pulpit addresses—profound thought, clear and comprehensive statement, and solemn, earnest, and awakening appeal.

All the ministers of the church were present, with the exception of Dr. Cunningham of London, and two fathers, both of whom were absent from indisposition, which, in the case of one, the Rev. Mr. Rogerson of Darvel, terminated in his decease during the sitting of Synod. While the court were deeply affected by the intelligence of this event, and sorrowed that they would no more see in the face one who so long and so regularly associated with them in the service of the Lord, it was highly encouraging to have added to their roll the names of four excellent and promising young ministers, who had been ordained since the previous meeting—viz., Mr. Binnie, at Stirling; Mr. Young, at Darvel; Mr. T. Easton, at Stranraer; and Mr. Kay, at Airdrie.

On various occasions there were earnest and animated discussions, conducted throughout in the best possible spirit; but an appeal to the vote was not considered necessary on a single question, and the decisions were unanimous. In this the church has much cause of gratitude to the God of truth and peace, and great encouragement to proceed in the work assigned to her, cultivating more and more that brotherly love, and that spirit of unity, without which she would become weak and useless. While the interests of truth should be most jealously watched over, and every deviation from the path of duty carefully guarded against, brethren are bound to exercise mutual forbearance, and to respect each other's opinions and feelings. This regard to "the truth and peace" was exemplified in the most delightful and refreshing harmony. It was, moreover, ground of thankfulness to the Head of the Church, that no case of a scandalous nature, involving the character of either an office-bearer or member of the church, and requiring the exercise of discipline, had to be brought before the court. Long may the church be preserved from the injury and grief which such cases occasion!

The Rev. David Henderson of Chirnside was chosen Moderator. The business was all disposed of in seven *sederunts*. Without entering into a variety of particulars, which were under consideration, we may notice some of the most important proceedings.

**SABBATH DESECRATION, &c.**—It was reported by the Committee on Sabbath desecration, that they had attended to the subject intrusted to them; and, in particular, that they had issued a circular, addressed to all the sessions under the Synod, containing suggestions which the committee considered important, and proper to be made in regard to the duty of sessions in reference to the profanation of the Lord's Day. The Synod approved of the proceedings of the committee, and re-appointed them. At the same time, it was agreed that a petition against all labour connected with the Post-office on the Lord's Day should be sent to the House of Commons. Dr. Andrew Symington, and Dr. Bates, were appointed to prepare the petition, which they did; and on being read it was adopted, and ordered to be forwarded to Charles Cowan, Esq., member for the city of Edinburgh, for presentation. A petition to the Commons was also adopted, and forwarded through the same gentleman, against Mr. Stuart Wortley's Bill for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

**FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.**—The Committee on Foreign Correspondence submitted communications from the Committees of two Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of America—respectively signed by the Rev. James M. Willson, chairman, and the Rev. Dr. John N. M'Leod, chairman. The Synod expressed their satisfaction in receiving these letters, and remitted them to their committee to be answered as early as convenient.

**MR. BERRY'S APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION.**—The Presbytery of Edinburgh referred the case of Mr. Berry; according to a rule which had been laid down to the effect, that Presbyteries should refer to Synod all cases of application for admission from ministers and licentiates connected with other churches. Mr. Berry, it appeared, was in connexion with a small body of the Original Associate Synod, which had not entered in the union formed betwixt that Synod and the Original Burghers a few years ago—he was ordained to the holy ministry, and laboured in Dundee, although not as the pastor of the people to whom he ministered there. The congregation in Dundee had already been received into the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Presbytery recommended Mr. Berry, who had given them the highest satisfaction, to the favourable consideration of Synod. A Committee was appointed to confer with Mr. B., and, having done so, they reported, recommending that he be received as an ordained minister, that the Presbytery of Edinburgh be instructed to take the requisite steps in carrying this recommendation into effect, and that his name be placed on the Synod's roll of probationers. This report was approved of and adopted, and the Presbytery of Edinburgh instructed accordingly.

**MISSIONARY BUSINESS.**—Dr. William Symington, Secretary of the Committee on a Mission to the Jews, read their report. It embraced a lengthened and highly interesting account of labours among the Jews in London, in the form of a letter to the Secretary by Dr. Cunningham. The Synod expressed their cordial satisfaction with the report, which they ordered to be printed and circulated, and their unabated confidence in the diligence, energy, and zeal of their missionary.

Dr. Bates, Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions, presented their report, bearing on the state and prospects of the missions in New Zealand and Canada, and relating what had been done in regard to evangelistic efforts on the Continent. It was approved by the Synod, and ordered to be printed and circulated. The thanks of the Synod were given to the com-

mittee, and especially to the Secretary, for the care and diligence shown by him in the preparation of the report, and in conducting the affairs of the mission generally.

**MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.**—Mr. Neilson, Secretary of the Committee on Ministerial Support, read their report. The scheme has already, in various respects, been productive of most beneficial results. It has encouraged and stimulated weak congregations; and furnished a guarantee, to which they are entitled, to young men, and which has begun, we think, to exert a happy influence that if they devote themselves to the Lord in the ministry of the gospel, the church will not allow them to lack what is needful for their support. The report was approved and adopted, and ordered to be printed and circulated throughout the church. The thanks of the Court were given to the Committee, and especially to the Secretary, for his zealous and efficient labours in this matter; and it was agreed that the congregations under the Synod be required to make collections in behalf of this scheme on the first Sabbath of March, 1851.

**CORRESPONDENCE WITH ORIGINAL SECEDERS.**—The report of the Committee of Correspondence with Original Seceders was given in. It stated that a meeting of the joint committee had taken place on the 17th of April, which was of an agreeable and encouraging kind, and embraced several propositions, which the joint committee recommended to the favourable consideration of the respective synods. A communication was read, at the same time, from the Synod of Original Seceders, intimating the re-appointment of their committee, and containing a request that arrangements be made by both Synods for holding their next meetings at the same time and place, that they might have a friendly conference respecting the propositions. The Synod entered on a consideration of the propositions recommended *seriatim*, not with a view to a formal or judicial adoption of them, but to ascertain whether, in the judgment of the Synod, these propositions contained the truth of Scripture on the points embraced, so as to encourage farther procedure in an endeavour to attain the union of the two bodies. They were generally approved, in reference to this object, whilst several alterations were suggested for the consideration of the joint-committee. The committee were re-appointed; and the Court agreed to respond to the request presented to them in regard to the time and place of the Synod's next meeting.

**ELDERSHIP AND DEACONSHIP.**—The report of the Committee on the Eldership and Deaconship was read. A memorial from the congregation of Greenock, on the subject of the report, praying the Synod to revive the office in the church; and a memorial from the session of Greenock, containing a similar prayer, and containing a variety of suggestions in regard to the offices both of the elder and the deacon, were also heard. After a lengthened consideration, it was agreed that the Synod was not prepared to give a definite decision on the various points raised in the report, and deemed it inexpedient to have any additional legislation on the subject. It was considered sufficient that the Confession of Faith, and the Testimony of the church had given distinct utterances on the matter, to warrant particular congregations to proceed in reviving the office of the deacon, provided their circumstances rendered it wise or practicable to do so.

**PERIOD OF PREACHERS' PROBATIONARY LABOURS.**—The Synod took up an overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow on the subject of preachers' probationary labours. It occasioned a long and interesting discussion. The Court, without coming to any decision on the principle involved in the overture, and after appointing a committee to revise its terms, agreed to send it down to sessions, with a request that they should consider it, and send their answers to Dr. William Symington, convener of the committee on the matter, before next meeting of Synod, that a matured report might be prepared

and submitted then. The overture now stands as follows:—"That in future, when a licentiate of this church shall have itinerated among our congregations for [five, seven, or ten] years, after his having had an opportunity of being called to a pastoral charge, his name shall be removed from the roll of preachers, unless there shall appear to Synod to be some special reason for its being continued on it for a specified time. It being understood that his name being dropped is not to affect his license to preach, the right of ministers or presbyteries to avail themselves of his services, or his eligibility to receive a call from any vacancy that may desire to have him as their minister."

**OATHS OF CIVIL OFFICE.**—A memorial from the congregation of Rothesay, praying the Court to devise means for securing to the members of this church exemption from the oaths usually required from persons who are vested with civil offices in this country, was received and read. A Committee was appointed to take the whole subject into consideration, and report at next meeting of Synod.

**THE REV. FREDERICK MONOD.**—The Rev. Frederick Monod of Paris, accompanied by John Henderson, Esq., of Park, and the Rev. Mr. France of Paisley, was introduced to the Synod. He appeared as the delegate of certain Evangelical Congregations in France, who had separated from the Protestant Reformed Church, in consequence of the errors taught in them, and the sinful nature of their connexion with the State. Mr. Monod delivered a clear and interesting address in reference to the state and prospects of the churches represented by him. The address was responded to by several members of Synod, and the following motion was unanimously agreed to:—"That it affords much pleasure to this Synod to have the opportunity of seeing and welcoming the Rev. F. Monod, as an esteemed minister of the Reformed Church of France, as one who has been honoured not only to testify for precious Gospel truth, held dear by this Synod, but also to make costly sacrifices for that truth. The Synod express at the same time their sincere sympathies with himself and his brethren in the trying but honourable position they have assumed of dissent from, and testimony against, the Protestant Church of France, with which they were formerly connected, as being corrupted by the erroneous doctrine held in it, and enslaved by the civil government, by which it is established. The Synod tender to M. Monod their fraternal and Christian congratulations, and their thanks for his present visit." It was agreed to refer to the Foreign Missionary Committee the question, as to whether any thing can be done in aiding this body with pecuniary contributions.

**DEATH OF REV. MR. ROGERSON OF DARVEL.**—In the course of its sittings it was intimated to the Synod that Mr. Rogerson of Darvel had died on Tuesday the 7th. They had previously received his resignation as clerk of Synod, and appointed Mr. Graham to that office. In accepting of the resignation, they recorded their regret for the occasion of it; and, on receiving intelligence of his decease, they felt it their duty to record the unfeigned respect in which they held the memory of Mr. Rogerson, who has been an ordained minister in this Church for forty years, and acted as clerk of Synod for thirty years; and whose soundness in the faith, strong attachment to the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, intrepidity in declaring the truth, and spirit of Catholic charity and zeal, entitled him to their confidence and esteem.

**PUBLIC BREAKFAST.**—On the morning of Wednesday, the members of Synod, together with a number of other friends, breakfasted together in Gibb's Hotel, Prince's street. Dr. Andrew Symington presided. A variety of interesting addresses were delivered, bearing chiefly on the state and prospects, the difficulties and encouragements of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The conversation indicated a large amount of brotherly affection and attachment to the peculiar principles for which the successors of the martyrs are called to contend,

and a determination in the strength of divine grace to labour with zeal and perseverance for the advancement of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Frank expression was given to what was felt to be trying and discouraging in relation to the cause of truth, but considerations of a cheering and animating nature were at the same time set forth, and we are sure that the brethren rose from this social and friendly re-union, greatly refreshed and invigorated in their minds.

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SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS.

The United Original Secession Synod met at Edinburgh, on Monday, the 29th April. The Synod petitioned against the Marriage Affinity Bill, and in favour of the suppression of all work in the Post-office on Sabbath. An overture was presented with a view to union with the Free Church of Scotland, on terms honouring to truth. After a long discussion, it was resolved that "whilst deeply sympathizing with the spirit of the overture in so far as it manifests a desire for union with the professed friends of the Covenanted Reformation, especially with the Free Church of Scotland, the Synod do not judge that it would conduce to that object to renew at present negotiations with that church; and as there is a Committee already existing for the purpose of carrying on correspondence with other Churches, with reference to union, leave it to the Committee to renew correspondence with the Free Church, if a favourable opportunity shall occur."

In regard to a Report prepared by a Joint Committee of this and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with a view to the union of both denominations, it was agreed to re-appoint the committee, with instructions to communicate their desires to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, that arrangements might be made for the next meeting of the Synods of both bodies being held in the same town, and at the same time, in order that a friendly conference might be held between them on the subject of union.

Dr. M'Crie gave in the Report of the Mission Committee. It stated that there had not been much done during the year, in the missionary fields, from want of proper agents. A Catechist had been employed in Ireland. The expenditure for the past year amounted to £115 6s. 2d; and there was lying in the banks, to the credit of the Mission Committee, £477.

After disposing of a variety of other matters, the Synod adjourned to the first Monday after the last Sabbath of April, 1851.

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UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church met at Edinburgh on the 6th of May, 1850. In the United Presbyterian Church, there are 28 presbyteries, including 503 congregations. The returns of membership from 364 congregations were 102,560, making an average of full 280 members in every congregation. 279 libraries are reported, including 96,850 volumes. The Committee on Theological Education reported that a uniform system of superintendence of the students had been adopted throughout the Church. 132 students had attended the Hall last year. Two thirds of the sum necessary for securing the application of the scheme of Ministers' Libraries for the whole Church had been subscribed. The Rev. And. Somerville gave in the report of the Mission Board.

HOME MISSIONS.—Ninety-two congregations have, during the year, received assistance from the fund for supplementing stipends, and twenty-one congregations have had grants voted them, making, in all, one hundred and thirteen congregations assisted by the Home Mission fund. The accessions to the membership of these congregations amount to upwards of 1000. The sum expended on home operations is £3613. The returns from eighty-seven supplemented congregations show that they have raised during the year £7276, being an average yearly contribution for each member of 15s. 4d.

CANADA.—There are, in Canada, thirty-seven ordained ministers and three preachers. Five have been ordained during the year. Toronto is to be the seat of the Theological Hall, and the session commences in August, and continues ten weeks.

JAMAICA.—The mission in Jamaica contains twenty-two congregations, which have a membership of about 4000, and an average attendance on Sabbath of 7000.

TRINIDAD.—In Trinidad there are two congregations. Both congregations are small.

OLD CALABAR.—In Old Calabar there are three stations, and the missionary force includes ten Europeans, five persons of colour from Jamaica, a converted native of Africa, and a captain with ship's crew. A church is to be put up in Creek Town, which will be the first house professedly erected for the worship of God in that part of Central Africa. Nearly two hundred children, of both sexes, and of all ranks, are attending the schools. Several little books have been printed in the Calabar or Efik language. The mission press at Calabar has already thrown off 55,300 pages. The missionaries have been at work scarcely four years, and already impressions have been produced which are distinctly visible. The Sabbath is now generally observed at Creek Town. The chief domestic idols which occupied the inner room in every house have been thrown into the river. Several young men meet regularly on Sabbath for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures.

PERSIA.—Mr. Glen has, during the winter, distributed at Teheran nearly two hundred copies of the Persian Bible. Between seven and eight hundred copies of the entire Word of God have been put in circulation in Persia; an amount of living seed which it is hoped will yet furnish a glorious harvest.

The whole contributions to the mission funds during the year have been £14,058; while the expenditure has been £15,341. The Scholarship Committee reported that twenty-eight theological students entered into the competition of August, 1849. The number of students attending college who competed last November was seventy-five. After disposing of a great variety of other matters, such as the Australian Marriages and National Education, in which they were sadly hampered by their voluntarism, the Synod adjourned to May, 1851.

## Foreign Missions.

### A VISIT TO HURDWAR.

In a letter from Rev. Mr. Woodside, dated April 30th, 1850, we have an interesting account of a visit to *Hurdwar*, which is regarded by the Hindoos as one of their most sacred places. Such accounts do much to promote the interests of the missionary cause, by showing how much need there is to give them the enlightening, sanctifying, and saving influence of the gospel.

Hurdwar, is the place where the river Ganges issues from the lowest range of the Himalayah mountains, and is one of the chief places of pilgrimage in Hindostan. This arises from the deification of this river, and the spiritually-cleansing virtue ascribed to its waters.

The popular belief in its efficacy is so firmly planted, that the people generally consider that "no matter how wicked a man may be in life, no matter if his sins become so numerous that even the powers of heaven are unable to number them," if a portion of his ashes or bones but touch the Ganges water, although his soul may be already in hell, it shall immediately effect its escape, and wing its way to heaven, to be confirmed in everlasting happiness. The consequence is that millions every year wend their way from all parts of Hindostan to this "sacred river," to cast in the ashes of their de-

parted friends, and bathe themselves in its waters. It would seem very strange, even to children, in America, who understand the nature of the origin of rivers, that men could be so blinded as to fancy a divinity in a mountain stream; but they must recollect that Hindoo notions of this river and its origin, are very different from what true science teaches on the subject. "Gunga," not Ganges, is the name by which the river is known among the natives. According to their Shastres, Gunga existed in heaven long before she came to earth perhaps from eternity, under the name of Mandakini. She was known to possess the power of taking away the guilt of sin, and securing eternal happiness to any who might touch her or even look upon her. Accordingly, it became a great object to get her down from the celestial regions into this sinful world. One of the Kings of "Ayodhya," supposed to be the ancient name of *Oude*, had sixty thousand sons, who, coming under the displeasure of a Brahmin named Kupil, were all destroyed, and their souls cast into hell, from which no power could possibly deliver them but the waters of Gunga. The last of their brothers, named Dilip, who succeeded to the throne of Ayodhya, was childless, and for the double purpose of obtaining a son and getting the waters of Gunga, to deliver up his brothers, he abandoned the affairs of his kingdom, and spent his time in penances and the devout worship of Brahma, the chief of the Hindoo gods. This worship he continued for the *brief period of one hundred millions of years*. At last the god condescends to hear him, and recollecting that from the seed of this king should spring one of the incarnations of *Vishnu*, he speaks comfort to the king, and sends Siva or Mahadev (the third person of the Hindoo triad) to promise him a son. The son is in due time born, but is a shapeless monster. A mere lump of flesh without bones, hence his name was called Bhagirath. His two mothers, as the two wives of his father are called, were so much enraged at the unnatural appearance of the child, that they took him in a basket and carried him to the river with the intention of drowning him. Here they were met by a Brahmin who prevented them, and an old cripple, "deformed in his *eight limbs*," (?) whose curse was death, and whose blessing was the highest of Heaven's gifts, being carried to the river, saw the child, and finding that he was naturally deformed, bestowed his blessing. The child immediately assumed a new form, and grew up a promising youth. Being at one time taunted by some Brahmin, for enjoying himself while his grandsire's family were suffering in hell, he determined to devote his whole life to the bringing down of the Ganges water from heaven. His mother made every effort to dissuade him from his purpose, but to no avail, and being instructed as to the course he should pursue, he enters upon a series of austerities and prayers in honour of Indra (the god of the elements.) In this worship he continues for the space of sixty thousand years. At the end of this time, Indra deigns to speak to him, tells him that he has no power over Gunga, and recommends him to go to Kailas mountain,\* (the residence of Mahadev,) and ask his assistance. He repairs to Kailas, and there prays for the period of ten thousand years, when Mahadev appears and blesses him, but informs him that he has no control over Gunga, and recommends him to go to Vishnu, (the second person in the Hindoo triad.) He betakes himself to the worship of Vishnu, repeats one million texts in twelve hours, with his face exposed to the sun, stands four months in a frozen river, and performs forty years' severe penance; after which Vishnu speaks to him, and tells him that he has no power over Gunga. The indefatigable Bhagirath, wearied out with severe suffering, replies that if he is not now assisted he must die, and asserts that he will never move from

\* This mountain lies north of the main range of the Himalayahs, and is a great place of pilgrimage; the Hindoos erroneously supposed it to be the highest of these mountains. I was informed a short time since by Capt. Streachy, who has lately measured it, that its height is 22,000 feet, much less than one quite close to it.



Vishnu's presence. Vishnu takes pity upon him, and promises his assistance. He proceeds to the kingdom of Brahma, and stealthily takes away all the water in heaven with the exception of Gunga. He then presents himself in the presence of Brahma, who rises up to receive him, and, according to a good eastern custom, proceeds to bring him water to wash his feet, but to his astonishment finds all the vessels completely dried up, as with the rays of the sun. Knowing that he must of necessity procure water to wash the feet of his guest, he thinks of the water of Gunga, which he brings, and, bowing before Vishnu, pours it upon his feet. The portion that fell from the feet of Vishnu, is given to Bhagirath; hence the Ganges is said to proceed from the feet of Vishnu. Bhagirath is put in a chariot, and given a large shell, which he is to sound as he descends to earth, carrying with him the blessed Gunga. He alights on the top of Mount Sumeru, a mountain, according to the Hindoos, in the far north, yet the centre of the Hindoo earth. It is 600,000 miles high, 128,000 miles in circumference at the base, and 356,000 wide at the top; besides it extends 128,000 miles down into the earth. Let your young friends think of this. In this country we have no mean ideas! On this mountain, which is the residence of the principal gods, did Bhagirath alight, carrying with him Gunga; but somehow here she left him, and wandered for twelve years in the centre of the mountain. Bhagirath now invokes the assistance of Airavnt, Indra's Elephant, which, with its formidable proboscis, makes four openings in the side of the mountain, out of which Gunga flowed in the direction of Kailas mountain, where she became absorbed into Shiva's (Mahadev's) hair. Again was the patience of Bhagirath put to the test, but by diligent entreaty he again prevails, and Mahadev wrings out a few drops from his hair into a cup, gives it to Bhagirath, and he takes his journey to the plains. He had not proceeded far, however, when he put down the vessel, and went into the adjoining field. In the mean time, a shepherd, who was keeping his flocks close by, passing that way, called aloud to one of his cows named "Gunga" to come to him. "The foot-produced maid," thinking *she* was called, leaped out of the vessel, and flowed after him, when, finding her mistake, she bent her course to the plains. Bhagirath now followed, and entreated her to come back to him. Much more is told of his after endeavours to obtain her, but we have said enough for our purpose. She had now passed Hurdwar, and was fairly started in her course to the ocean. Rather than spoil the story at the conclusion, it may be as well to state, that she promised at last to come to him in the *Kaliyug*, or last age of the world, i. e., the present age; and the prevailing belief here now is, that forty-nine years from this time, Gunga will flow into "Bhagirath's Well," for the purpose of redeeming Lagor's sixty thousand sons; and, after that time, although a river may still continue to flow, it will have lost all its virtue. May it not be possible, my dear sir, that some of the children who now read this, may yet stand at Hurdwar fifty years hence, and behold the completion of this tale, i. e., the departure of the glory of Gunga; not as the Hindoos suppose, by absorption in Bhagirath's Well, but, as I often tell them, by the power of the gospel of Christ, which will in all probability have wrought such a change in Hindostan before fifty years, that the glory of the divinities now worshipped will have indeed departed.—Now some may be disposed to think that the absurdity of the above story is so palpable, that no man could possibly believe it. This, you must not for a moment suppose. As easy would it be to convince a California emigrant, that the precious metal for which he longs, does not exist in that land, or that the "diggings" themselves may be found in Nova Scotia, as you could persuade a Hindoo to yield his faith in these things. The Hindoo mind is strangely constructed. After you may have reasoned so conclusively that even ocular demonstration could not make it plainer, to convince a Hindoo of the absurdity of his system, and even after

he has assented to all you may have advanced, you put the question, "Do you now believe?" you are met by a skeptical "perhaps?" that shows how little he regards the force of truth, or cares for its teachings.

The above notice of the Hindoo notions in regard to the origin of the Ganges, will throw some light upon the cause of the superstitious observances practised at Hurdwar. The term Hurdwar signifies "the door of Vishnu," or "the gate of God," and the river at this particular point just issuing fresh from the mountains, is considered to be peculiarly sacred. But in addition to this circumstance, others conspire in rendering some particular *seasons* (years) more propitious than others. When I gather a little more correct information on this subject, I will probably at another time make it the subject of a note to you. At present, it is enough to observe that every twelfth year, called "the Kum," or "Coom," is looked upon as very propitious, and many more people assemble than at other times. The present year is the sixth since the occurrence of a "*Coom*," and is called the "half Coom," which is also considered much superior to a common year. Owing to this circumstance, the Mela this year was much larger than it has been since the "*Coom*" six years ago.

[To be continued.]

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#### JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE UP THE GANGES.

[Continued.]

A short distance above Benares is a handsome palace, the residence of the Rajah of Benares, and about twenty-two miles from the city is the town and fortress of Chunar. This fortress is a place used for the confinement of state criminals, and from which a female prisoner of rank lately made good her escape, notwithstanding the strength of the place, and the vigilance of the officers.

I may here introduce a little fact in missionary history, which I had intended to mention in connexion with Benares, as it was there we heard it. It relates to the close of the life and the death of Mr. Hill, a distinguished missionary of the London Missionary Society. For many years he laboured most energetically and successfully at Berampore. Latterly he had been suffering from prostration of body and mind, the effects of premature old age, no doubt induced by his activity in the missionary work. There is nothing in this country which sooner destroys itself, than an eager temperament. A sanguine, ardent, and persevering disposition, although it will accomplish more in the same time, will always here be of shorter duration than that of an opposite character; there are so many obstructions in the path, that the man who is constantly labouring with all his might to clear them away, will not endure so long as he who can pass by or over these, and take the path just as he finds it. So we believe it was with poor Mr. Hill, he accomplished much, but it was at the expense of his life. Although for some time suffering from severe indisposition, he could not think of giving up his work, but was, if possible, more eager for the salvation of the heathen than before. At the commencement of the cold season, he started from Calcutta for the hills, by the river route. We had heard in Calcutta of his movements, and expected to overtake him at some point in the journey, but this we were not permitted to do. His son accompanied him part of the way, when, feeling somewhat better, he would not consent to allow his son to leave his duties, even to wait upon his languishing parent. Thus he was left with none near him but the heathen. As we passed up at the various stations, we heard of his progress, and apparent convalescence. To expedite his journey, he had abandoned a large Budgerow, in which he had started, and where he had good accommodations, for a little *native boat*, where he was crowded up with baggage of various kinds, principally stores of *books*, which he had packed up for distribution on his way. In this way proceeding, he was, at last, a short distance below Benares, found dead by a European surveyor of the river. How long he had been dead was not well known, nor was any

thing known about his last hours. There were none near him but faithless servants, and it is supposed that his death may have been hastened partly by their inattention. Thus a brave soldier of the cross fell, and thus you have an illustration of the contingencies incident to missionary enterprise. His death is deeply lamented, and his melancholy condition at the time of death the subject of much regret—yet this was owing mainly to his own zeal.

Excuse this digression—I insert it as a good example of Christian devotion in the cause of Missions, and as an instance of the vicissitudes to which missionaries, in the pursuit of their all-engrossing avocation, are exposed.

The next place of importance above Chunar is Mirzapore, a civil and military station. Here the London missionaries have an orphan institution, printing press, and other departments of labour, all successfully progressing. We spent a Sabbath here. Brother C. preached in the evening, in the mission church. This city presents more elements of improvement than any place I have yet visited. It contains a great many very wealthy natives, and these distinguished for liberality. It is a place of considerable trade, and is virtually the head of steam navigation on this river. It is near to an extensive coal region—rather a rare thing here. It is 748 miles from Calcutta, by the short route, and eighty-three miles below Allahabad, by water, a much less distance by land. By the direction and advice of the English magistrate, a beautiful square has been built in the centre of this city, which would be no disgrace to Philadelphia or New York. The other parts of the city are arranged with wider streets and better means of comfort than any other city I have yet seen in this country. In such a community, I should not be surprised to hear of the gospel making rapid progress. Four miles above Mirzapore is a noted resort of disreputable people, who assemble here annually to make vows and pujahs. The name of the place is Bindachun. From this place, the banks of the river become very high, and composed of Konker, or rocks of limestone composition, I think peculiar to this country. It is now used extensively in making roads which are superior in finish and durability to the best English roads.

On the 23d of February, we reached Allahabad. This was a point to which we looked forward as to a home, for here are the missionaries of the Presbyterian Board; and well did our reception realize our anticipations. Messrs. Freeman and Hodge had written, offering us their hospitality during our stay. These brethren, as our boats touched the landing, stood waiting to receive us, and we were soon among the warmest friends we had yet seen. Here I would remark upon the happy effect of our arrangements with the Presbyterian Board. Owing to this arrangement, we and the brethren of the sister church feel a community of interest which would not otherwise exist. However agreeable may be the relations of missionaries of different societies, and however well the Christian spirit may be manifested in their mutual intercourse, there is not that homologation of feeling, that family-like intercourse, which exists among those situated as we are, who feel that our interests are one, that we issue from the same source, and are under the supervision of the same agency.

The first thing that arrested our attention on nearing Allahabad was the collection of devoices assembled at the point where the waters of the Jumna flow into the Ganges. This is the scene of an annual mela, which affords the brethren here stationed many opportunities of extensive usefulness. On reaching this spot, the eye was attracted by the motley group of tents, surmounted with rude flags of every description, crowds of people moving about in foolish processions, and others bathing their sinful bodies in the sacred stream; the ear, too, was forced to abide the perpetual din of their unmusical instruments, and the still greater jargon of their unharmonious voices mixed, we suppose, in honour of their deities. Behind this rises a large fort occupied by a strong garrison. In this fort is a monument called Alexander's

pillar, said to have been erected by this great conqueror himself—but it is well known that he never reached this point in his conquest of India. It may, however, have been built by Seleucus, and named in honour of Alexander, as this part of the country, and part of Bengal, was conquered by him. Many of these pillars are erected in the interior of the continent, marking Alexander's progress, particularly on his track through Afghanistan. In this fort also is the entrance to a cave, or, as the Hindoos say, a subterraneous passage to Benares, or heaven. It is kept sacred by some holy men of this faith, and made the means of extortion from pilgrims and devotees at the annual fair. My curiosity would have led me to examine some of its secrets, but we were prevented in a very impertinent manner by a sepoy stationed there for the purpose. Thus the British government protect these foolish superstitions, and assist by their influence to keep the people in ignorance. Here is Hindooism, priestly tyranny, and superstition, protected by all the armed power of a British fortress—of the British government. How easy it would be to undeceive the multitude in reference to the pretended secrets of this cave, if this iniquitous surveillance were not maintained by the reigning power, but left open for general investigation. I was much deceived with the appearance of the city. Instead of being a large, closely-populated place, as I had fancied, it is quite the reverse. It seems more like a number of scattered villages, with one larger than the rest as a kind of centre. The operations of the brethren at this station are too well known by you to require any particular notice in this place. It is enough to say they are most encouraging. We remained here from Friday till Wednesday morning. We cannot soon forget the kindness of the brethren there, each vyeing with the other who would show us most kindness. Mr. C. preached on Sabbath evening in the mission church, and baptized our little girl.

(To be continued.)

### Obituary.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE SESSION OF THE THIRD REFORMED PRESB. CHURCH, PHILA.

At a meeting of Session held in the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church, on the 19th of July last, the following statement and resolution having been presented by a member previously appointed, were adopted.

With painful regret we mention, that, since our meeting on the eve of our last communion, a breach has been made, for the first time, upon this session, in the removal of one of its members by death. MR. WILLIAM BRANYAN, who was evidently in the bloom and vigour of youth, enjoying the confidence and respect of all the members of the congregation, and whose valuable services as a ruling elder had already won for him a high reputation, is no more; therefore,

*Resolved, 1st,* That, in the death of Mr. Branyan, this session sustains the loss of a very worthy member, and the church an active and efficient officer.

*Resolved, 2d,* That the above be entered on the records of this session, and published in the Banner of the Covenant in connexion with an obituary notice, to be prepared by his intimate friend.

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

**DIED,** November 26th, 1849, Mr. William Branyan, aged thirty-two years. In the earlier part of his life, Mr. B. was a member of the Presbyterian congregation of Glentubbert, County Monaghan, Ireland. After his emigration to this country, he was, part of the time, in communion with the Second Associate Church of this city. His behaviour was always much in keeping with his religious profession. It was in the fall of 1847, he connected himself with the Third Reformed Presbyterian Church, in Kensington, (Rev. R. J. Black's.) He was regular in his attendance upon public worship on the Sabbath, and in the weekly prayer meeting his seat was seldom if ever empty. He gave evidence of high attainments in knowledge and Christian experience, and that he possessed not the form of godliness only, but also the power. Soon after, he was elected and regularly ordained to the office of ruling elder, the duties of which he continued to discharge, with honour to himself and acceptance to the people, during the short remaining period of his life.

Two weeks before his death he had to consign to the "house appointed for all living," the partner of his bosom, who left to him the charge of her infant son.\* Immediately after, he was seized with disease, which soon indicated that his own change was near. During his illness his mind was calm, and his faith firm and steadfast, for he had an anchor within the veil—"he departed, to be with Christ, which is far better." He was much lamented by all his friends—and we know he had many friends, but few, if any, enemies. He was meek, gentle and kind; thought much, and spoke little. He had studied the scriptures and the doctrinal standards of the church, and understood them well, by which his mind—naturally vigorous—was much improved. He was therefore endowed with an excellent capacity for usefulness in the office to which he had lately been appointed. His general character was that of a consistent Christian, respected by all his brethren in the church, and beloved by all his friends.

### Christian Union.

[For the Banner of the Covenant.]

#### CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES ON CHRISTIAN UNION.

The Conference met pursuant to adjournment in the lecture room of Rev. Dr. M'Leod's church, 12th Street, New York, September 4th, 1850, at 11 o'clock, A. M., and in the absence of the President was called to order by the Secretary. Whereupon, Rev. Dr. Davidson was called to the chair. At his request, Rev. T. W. J. Wylie opened the meeting by prayer.

There were present

*From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States,* Rev. Dr. Davidson.

*From the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America,* Rev. Dr. M'Leod, Rev. T. W. J. Wylie, and Thos. Cumming, Esq.

From the other bodies formerly appearing in the Conference, there was no representation.

Rev. Dr. M'Leod was continued Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read, as approved at the close of said meeting.

Rev. Dr. Davidson reported, that as none of the delegates to the last meeting of Conference had been present at the last meeting of the General Assembly, no report had been made of its proceedings to the Assembly, nor any action taken by them on the subject, except to re-appoint their delegates.

Rev. Dr. M'Leod reported, by reading the action of the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on the subject, from their printed minutes. That body had approved the action of their delegates, and renewed their appointments.

Remarks were heard from the President and other members of Conference on the general subject.

Rev. T. W. J. Wylie, presented the following resolution, which, after remarks from the chair, and from members generally, was unanimously adopted.

*Resolved,* That the system of slaveholding is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and at variance with the inalienable rights of man, and that the different branches of the Christian church should distinctly condemn it, and use all scriptural and prudent measures in their power, to remove it.

After farther consideration the following resolution was adopted.

*Resolved,* That as it appears that Conference have effected all in their power to accomplish the ends of their appointment, they do now adjourn, and re-commit the whole subject to the churches represented.

The Secretary was directed to publish the proceedings of Conference. Whereupon,

Conference adjourned, *sine die*, the President concluding by prayer.

Signed, JOHN N. M'LEOD, *Secretary.*

New York, Sept. 4th, 1850.

\* This interesting little boy died, July 5th, 1850, aged eight months and five days.

## Editorial.

### THE DIRECTORY AND RULES OF ORDER.

This very useful work has now been published in a neat and convenient form, and is for sale at a low price. It contains the valuable compend drawn up, a number of years since, by the late venerable Dr. Black, which gives such a masterly system of directions for conducting religious services, in the closet, in the family, in the fellowship meeting, and in the public congregation. An excellent collection of rules for judicatories, and forms for calls, certificates, and statistical records and reports, is subjoined. To our ministers and ruling elders the work may be considered as *indispensable*, and, indeed, every member of our church should possess a copy. Application may be made to the publisher of the Banner.

### REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALLEGHENY, PA.

We find the following in the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Advocate. It gives us great pleasure to observe this well-merited expression of regard, and we rejoice to learn that while our respected brother discharges with so much diligence and usefulness his duties as Chaplain of the Western Penitentiary, he is enjoying evidences of the divine blessing, in the success attending his pastoral labours. We understand that, at the late communion in his church, there was an accession of twenty-eight persons.

“It is with great pleasure that we observe an article in one of our Dailies, referring to recent alterations and improvements in the church edifice of which our worthy Brother, A. W. Black, is pastor. If a talented, sound, and faithful pastor can add any thing to the interests of that church, then can we assure those that love the gospel every opportunity of being profited in waiting upon God, in connexion with that congregation.”

### THE SUSTENTATION PLAN.

By an article on this subject from the pen of one of the most active and useful members of our church, it will be seen that the system which has been advocated with much ability by our correspondent] “Layman,” does not meet with universal approbation. This was not to be expected, and our design in publishing his communications regarding it, was, principally, to lead to a thorough discussion of the best mode of sustaining the ministry. We think that none would wish that the support of any of our ministers should be *reduced*, while all desire that such a plan should be adopted as would secure an adequate subsistence to many of our pastors and preachers who are struggling with the embarrassments occasioned by insufficient salaries. Nor, again, we feel confident, would any seek that the responsibilities of a congregation to do *all in its power* to sustain its own pastor, should be weakened, or that the *poorer* should not give as much as *they* are able, because the *richer* should contribute more, or that the *latter* should assume the obligations of the *former*, so that the one should do almost all, and the others should do *little* or *nothing*. It is also desirable that the duty should be brought home to the conscience of every individual, so that each one may feel his *personal responsibility*. We like much the plan which is pursued by our Scottish brethren, to which reference is made in their proceedings, published in our present number. The general principle of the plan is, that “No minister shall receive less than £100 per annum, with mause, and sacramental and travelling expenses.” Congregations having 150 members and upwards, which fall short of this amount, are to be induced to come up to it, while weaker congregations are to be aided, according to circumstances, to enable them to reach it. While there is a general fund, there must be the manifestation of proper

exertion on the part of any congregation seeking for assistance, to entitle it to receive any thing from that fund. This acts as a stimulus to the weaker congregations, and it has been found that the aid-receiving congregations contribute more liberally towards the support of the gospel, in proportion to their numbers, than any others; and while "less than three years ago, there were only *six* congregations giving the minimum stipend or upwards, these now amount to *seventeen*, and several others are on the verge of it; and almost all have been considerably elevated." We refrain at present from entering more particularly into the subject, as we hope in our next number to publish the report of the committee having the superintendence of this branch of the Synod's operations.

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"THE COVENANTER."

We find, in the last number of the *Covenanter*, an article in reply to some editorial remarks published in our August number. Without protracting a discussion which would be likely to degenerate into mere wrangling, we yet feel called upon to make a few remarks.

We find that the editor of the *Covenanter*, now that he has been made to comprehend the meaning of the writer, fully agrees with him, in regard to the plan of argument: "We find no fault with this," is his language. But we observe that he throws the blame of his own want of attention upon the writer's style of composition, and "advises him, before undertaking to publish a matter concerning the faith of God's people, to *submit the manuscript to some one that understands English.*" This is quite amusing, and requires no reply: it would be a pity to take away such shelter from one who has no other.

We are accused with "misquoting" Turretine, with "*misrepresenting him most grossly,*" with want of "*sense, and want of conscience,*" "for the word *mendum*, translated here 'errors,' signifies 'a blemish,' 'a trifling error.'" This is rather a small foundation on which to build so much denunciation, especially as we find, on referring to the *Lexicon of Facciolati and Forcellini*, the best authority we know of, that the meaning given in that work is, "a fault, error, blunder." We quoted Turretine's language merely to show that he admitted that there were errors in the manuscripts of the Sacred Text, whether greater or smaller, does not at all affect the argument. We may now make a further quotation from another writer, to the same effect, and, strange to say, this writer is the editor of the *Covenanter* himself, who appears so bewildered that he knows not what he says, nor whereof he affirms. At the close of his article, he states, "*no infallible direction* is either furnished or given to transcribers, printers, &c., yet it has been watched over, the errors [the very word we are censured for employing] have been in trifling matters, generally, and these susceptible of correction." This is quite enough. It admits that there have been corruptions and variations in the sacred text, and from the word "generally," used by the editor of the *Covenanter*, we would infer that he believed *some* of these had been in matters of importance, as indeed no scholar would deny.

We are represented as making a "statement that we [the editor of the *Covenanter*] had gone over bodily to the Papists, inasmuch as we [the editor of the *Covenanter*] had quoted some great names," and this is cited as an illustration of our "stupidity," and we are said to "draw largely upon the credulity or malignity of its [the *Banner's*] readers." Some strange hallucination must have come over the understanding of the editor of the *Covenanter*. He had charged the writer of the article in the *Banner*, with having "gone over to the Papists," and we showed that, according to his own mode of reasoning, the same charge might be brought against himself: what we

wrote was "*were we to adopt the logic of the Covenanter*, we might say that he, in doing so, had gone over bodily to the Papists." We would hardly have supposed that any would imagine that we did adopt his logic, as the whole purport of our remarks disproved his reasoning. Our readers are neither credulous or malignant, and we do not suppose any of them thought we charged the editor of the Covenanter with Papistical tendencies, for quoting some great names.

We do not design to enter into any defence of the views of the article in the Banner, which has been thus attacked by the Covenanter. We have merely wished to prevent its misrepresentation. We have no objection that any should believe or maintain the *verbal* inspiration of the scriptures, nor do we consider the other view worthy of reprobation. The arguments of the Covenanter, on the subject, may go for what they are worth, but we think that most reflecting persons will require something more satisfactory. His first argument is, "*It is the word of God*," an assertion which no Christian will deny, but which does not at all touch the point in discussion, while the passages he quotes to prove his *second argument*, that the *Scriptures affirm it*, are not at all inconsistent with the opinion that inspiration consisted in "imbuing the mind with divine ideas." Speaking under the influence of the HOLY GHOST, it was true it was not the apostles themselves who were to be considered as speaking, but the HOLY GHOST, although *literally* the Divine Spirit did not articulate the words. This same *supernatural influence* is indicated by the Apostle, when he speaks of "holy men of God being moved by the HOLY GHOST," and by the Psalmist, when he says, "the SPIRIT OF THE LORD spake by me." The expression "the word of God," as almost every child of Christian parents knows, means, not simply the audible voice of the Almighty, but the *doctrine*, or *truth*, or *revelation* of God; thus we read "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," "who have tasted the good word of God," &c., &c. The *third argument*, that *as to the prophecies particularly, they were not understood by the penmen themselves*, does not affect the subject, since there is reason to suppose that the inspired writers may have very imperfectly comprehended the full meaning of much that they announced, while yet they may have delivered their message in their own style. The *fourth argument* is, "if the words are not God's, then we cannot safely reason from them," which would show that we could not reason from *any translation*, however accurate, since none will pretend that the words of the *translation* are *inspired*: it is only necessary that they express properly the *meaning* of the original writer, and if they do this, we may reason from them with the greatest propriety: otherwise, none could reason from the Scriptures, unless they understood the original languages, and the great mass of the Christian community would be excluded from using the Scriptures, as they could not reason from them safely, because the *words* are not God's. It has been maintained in the article which has led to all these remarks, that the sacred writers were guided and overruled in their choice of words; and that they accurately expressed the meaning of the HOLY GHOST, so that they could not be considered as employing any improper or defective word.

The arguments of the Covenanter may thus be easily disposed of. His cause can have a better defence, and perhaps he may do well to try again, though we cannot promise him any further notice. As he complains of a want of courtesy, we have endeavoured to treat him gently, though the terms he employs when he speaks of our "stupidity," and "slander," and "gross misrepresentation," and when he mildly tells us, "if we had sense, we would see it, and conscience, we would acknowledge it," with much more of the same kind, show but a poor example.



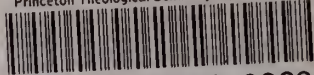


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